

I am writing to voice my support for a national "do not call" list so that people can stop telemarketing calls by sending a simple postcard or e-mail to the appropriate authority. I can hang a "no soliciting" sign on my door and have anyone who violates it arrested. Why can't I do the same with my phone? There should be no exemptions or loopholes, and no one should have to provide their name or other personal information in order to be placed on the list.

In addition to the usual intrusive sales pitches, I am now getting more and more of these "hang-up" calls from telemarketers who use "auto-dialers." People who inadvertently dial wrong numbers at least have the courtesy to apologize. These hang-up calls are even more irritating than the sales pitches themselves. How can they call me, and then not have the common courtesy of being there when I answer the phone?

Even worse, I am getting more and more of these recorded sales pitches, too. They never say who they are, and if you call them back to tell them to stop calling you, you only hear more recorded sales pitches. I do not want more sales pitches; I want them to stop calling me.

Calls by charities should be treated no differently. Telemarketing is unacceptable, no matter who is calling - I don't care if the Pope himself is on the line. I was told that telemarketers are exempt from the law if they donate some portion of their sales to charity. This is a horrible loophole. The irreparable damage done to the peace and quiet of my home is the same, whether they have violated my privacy for fun, profit, or charity.

Finally, I am even more disturbed by the shady "privacy protection" industry that has sprung up as a direct result of people being fed up with telemarketing. Phone companies first sell your number to telemarketers in order to create a need for "privacy protection" tools, then they bilk you again by selling you such "services" as caller ID, call blocking, "privacy manager," etc. There is a name for this practice. It is called extortion.

Isn't it about time Americans everywhere stood up for their fundamental right to privacy?